

U.S. Coast Guard Support Center Alameda, Warehouse  
(Bldg. No. 17)  
Spencer Road and Icarus Drive, Coast Guard Island  
Alameda  
Alameda County  
California

**HABS No.**

CA-2640-A

HABS  
CAL  
1- ALAM,  
3-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

U.S. COAST GUARD SUPPORT CENTER, ALAMEDA, WAREHOUSE (Bldg. No. 17)

HABS No. CA-2640-A

**Location:** Spencer Road and Icarus Drive, Coast Guard Island, Alameda, Alameda Co., CA 94501-5100. UTM Zone 10, 566,050/4,181,610. Quad Map No. 4653. Parcel No. 74-960-1.

**Significance:** According to a HABS survey prepared by Ana Beth Koval in 1992: "This building is one of the fourteen 1930s buildings on Coast Guard Island which appear to be eligible to the National Register as a contributor to a historic district. The buildings form an intact 1930s federal government office and industrial compound. The district appears to meet Criteria A and C. The district appears to have been a prototype federal government complex of offices and industrial spaces used by several federal agencies (Criterion A). This group of buildings is an excellent example of Art Deco/Moderne style industrial buildings. Even though the buildings vary in size and function, they are unified through their style (Criterion C). While alterations have been made individually to the buildings, together they appear to have sufficient integrity."

**Description:** Building 17 is a rectangular (54' X 164'), flat-roofed one-story building enclosing 8,865 square feet. It is a steel frame, brick and hollow-clay tile structure on a concrete foundation. Exterior elevations begin with the raised concrete foundation to 2'-5", step back to a one foot high cast stone water table, and step back again to the common bond brick wall field. This expanse of wall continues to the cast stone parapet coping, relieved by a soldier course strip at lintel height. Ornamentation is simple and integral, consisting of cast stone rectangular insets at the end walls and at the end bays of the long walls, and diamond pattern brick insets above all other openings on the long walls. Vertically-scored cast stone crests relieve the cast stone coping topping the building, at the end bays of the long elevations, and centered at the end walls.

Original openings were very consistent, and included steel sash multi-lite windows on all elevations. Seven steel vertical-lift loading doors with multi-lite glazed panels dominated the south elevation. On the north elevation, each of the seven center bays contained tripartite steel sash windows with steel doors below. The west wall features double steel doors, with a transom above, and a pair of steel sash windows at either side. The east elevation features two steel sash windows.

Exterior alterations affect primarily the building's openings. On the south elevation, none of the original vertical-lift loading doors survive. These doors have either been replaced by rolling metal doors, or by makeshift

U.S. COAST GUARD SUPPORT CENTER, ALAMEDA, WAREHOUSE (Bldg. No. 17)  
HABS No. CA-2640-A (Page 2)

plywood infill/wood door and window combinations. On the north elevation, all of the steel sash windows are covered with plywood panels, and most of the original doors have been replaced. The condition of the building is poor, with earthquake-induced shear cracks visible most notably at the center of the masonry on the south elevation.

The original floor plan consisted of eight areas, divided by walls running north-south. At the east end was the 35' wide "Ship and Radio Stores Issuing Room." The next six bays were 17'-4" wide, and on the original construction drawings were labeled "Calif. Div.," "Northland," "Tahoe," "Shoshone," "Shawnee," and "Base 11." Five of these bays had balconies covering nearly half of the space. The western-most of these bays, "Calif. Div.," had no balcony, but instead featured a telephone storeroom at its north end. The western end of the building was physically and functionally separate from the remainder of the structure. This suite featured a shower room, storage room, toilet room and entry.

The interior of Building 17 is currently divided into three sections. The east end of the building, retaining much of its original character, consists of a relatively open warehouse space with a half-height, enclosed storage area in the northeast corner of the space. Finishes include a concrete floor, painted hollow-clay tile walls, and a ceiling consisting of steel beams with random width wood planking. This space connects with a long, narrow storage bay running the width of the building. A ladder-accessed steel mezzanine covers nearly half the width and almost the entire northern half of the space.

The center section is the most altered portion of the building. The area has been reconfigured by the addition of frame partitions, and by cutting new openings in the hollow clay tile walls. Original finishes are completely obliterated by a carpeted floor, simulated wood paneling on the walls, and a suspended acoustical ceiling. Many of the original balconies remain above the suspended ceilings, and appear to have been most recently used as offices and storage areas.

The west end of the building, originally housing a toilet room, shower room, entry vestibule, and storage/mechanical room, retains many original features and finishes. Floors in the entry vestibule and toilet room (the northwest corner room) retain their original finish: white glazed 1/2" X 1" ceramic tile laid in a herringbone pattern. Original wall finish, consisting of ceramic tile wainscot to 5'-8" with plaster above, remains in the toilet room, shower room, and entry. Other period elements include urinals in the toilet room, and the hot water heater, with associated valves and fittings, in the storage room.

U.S. COAST GUARD SUPPORT CENTER, ALAMEDA, WAREHOUSE (Bldg. No. 17)  
HABS No. CA-2640-A (Page 3)

**Historical Context:** This structure was designed for the U.S. Coast Guard in 1932 and construction completed in 1933. It was one of a complex of fourteen structures built in the early thirties as the first permanent buildings on the island. The complex included buildings for use by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads in addition to the Coast Guard. Captain Ambrose B. Brown of the Bureau of Public Roads was the Engineer-in-Charge of this early phase of permanent construction. M.C. Betts was the Architect-in-Charge, and Clinton Construction Company was the General Contractor for Building 17. The Coast Guard prepared plans for the repair of Building 17 in 1945. The building was modified in 1976 when it was remodeled for use by Training Team - 1. The Naval Facilities Engineering Command designed these modifications. Known uses of the building include its initial use as a Coast Guard Warehouse, use by the Weather Bureau from the 1950s to 1968, and use by the Coast Guard Training Team 1 from 1976 until 1992. The structure was badly damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake.

**Sources:** Koval, Ana B. and Lawrence-Dietz, Patricia. *Support Center Alameda HABS Survey, Coast Guard Island, Alameda, California*. Berkeley CA: Dillingham Associates and Rainshadow Associates, 1992.

United States Coast Guard Island. Real Property Office Files for Support Center Alameda.

United States Coast Guard. Engineering Office Drawings for Support Center Alameda.

**Project Information:** This structure is being documented as required by NEPA. Substantial damage from the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake rendered the building a life safety hazard. After conducting numerous engineering studies, the Coast Guard decided to demolish the building, and demolition is scheduled for September 1995.

Carey & Co. Inc., Architecture, prepared this survey for CH2M Hill and the United States Coast Guard. Nancy Goldenberg, Architectural Historian, was project manager for Carey & Co. and primary author of this document. Lt. Robert Tarr of the U.S. Coast Guard coordinated the work for the Coast Guard. The report was prepared in August, 1995.

